

Immediate Emancipation in Missouri.

S P E E C H

OF

CHARLES D. DRAKE,

DELIVERED IN THE

Missouri State Convention, June 16th, 1863.

Mr. DRAKE introduced into the Convention the following resolution :

" *Resolved*, That it is expedient that an ordinance should be passed by this Convention, providing as follows :

" *First*. For the emancipation of all slaves in this State on the first day of January, A. D. 1864 :

" *Second*. For the perpetual prohibition of negro Slavery in this State, from and after that date :

" *Third*. For a system of apprenticeship of the slaves so emancipated, for such period as may be sufficient to avoid any serious inconvenience to those interests with which slave labor is now connected, and to prepare the emancipated blacks for complete freedom :

" *Fourth*. For submitting said ordinance to a vote of the people for their ratification or rejection, on the first Monday of August next."

Upon this resolution Mr. Drake spoke as follows :

The intention of presenting this resolution is to ascertain, as soon as practicable, the sense of this body on the important subject in regard to which, principally, we are called together. Of course I do not indulge the hope of its escaping opposition. I therefore deem it proper to accompany its presentation with an exposition of the reasons which have influenced me to offer it. I will, first, briefly refer to my own position, and then state, with such fullness as may seem to me necessary, the grounds upon which

I favor a plan of Emancipation such as this resolution points to. I respectfully crave the candid attention of the Convention.

Entering this assembly a stranger to two-thirds of its members, it is fit that I should indicate my past position and present views in regard to the institution of Slavery, in order that all may understand that in no respect am I influenced, nor shall at any time willingly permit myself to be, by any fanatical opinions or feelings against it as a system of labor. If I know myself, I approach the subject with as much coolness of head and calmness of spirit, as if it had never been, with me or others, a matter of excited discussion. I know nothing of my own mind and heart, if I am not actuated by a sincere desire to see the path of duty here, and to walk in it because it is the path of duty. And I mean not duty shaped by foregone conclusions, by party behests, or by unregulated enthusiasm; but duty to the highest and purest dictates which can influence me, in view of my responsibility to the people of Missouri, to posterity, and to God. That duty I will strive to follow, wherever it may lead, and whatever the consequences.

At no period of my life, until after our national flag was lowered—but not degraded—at Sumter, was I, in the commonly-understood acceptance of the term, an anti-Slavery man; much less could it ever have been truly said of me, before that event or since, that I was an Abolitionist, in the sense in which that name was

applied and understood for many years before the outbreak of the rebellion which now wars upon the Union, and has brought such accumulated wretchedness to our own State. But from the day of Sumter's fall, I hesitate not to declare here, as I have, in effect, in other places, that my preconceptions in regard to the character of the institution of Slavery have been gradually swept away before the ever swelling tide of conviction, that there never was any other origin of this rebellion, nor any other sustaining power upholding it, than the wide-spread, long-formed, deliberate, and audacious purpose to build upon Slavery a mighty Empire, which, beginning its march on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and spreading, first westward and southward, should, in the course of years, as it gained establishment, influence, and power, turn northward, to invest Slavery forever with "the mastery of this whole continent." As that conviction slowly but certainly fixed itself in my mind, another grew up there, equally forcible and steadfast—that the movement which Slavery made, in such godless defiance of all obligations, human and Divine, to establish itself by the sword as a Power upon this continent, presented to every human being in the land the instant and unavoidable alternative of suffering this great nation to be destroyed, or of destroying Slavery, its assailant, wherever it was in arms against the Union. When that became apparent to me, I became the foe of Slavery, without a moment's misgiving, wavering, or thought of change. I saw it was Country or Slavery; and I should have held myself a coward and a traitor, if so seeing, I had hesitated, one second of time as to my course.

In this brief statement you have the explanation of my present hostility to Slavery. I announce it at the opening of my service in this body, for two reasons: First, that my compeers here may fully understand why I, once a political defender of Slavery, am now its enemy; and Secondly, that if there are any here who, in this desperate conflict between American Slavery and American Liberty, are on the side of Slavery, they may make it known. This is the time and this the place for every man to show under which banner he ranges.

But, perhaps, there may be those who, agreeing with me as to Southern Slavery, are yet of the opinion that Missouri Slavery does not deserve a like condemnation. Were I of that opinion, it might modify my views and action here; but my judgment is, that *the spirit* of American Slavery is everywhere essentially the same, and that the history of this rebellion proves it. Look at our sister State on the East, and mark the contrast between her and Missouri

during this war. We have been ravaged, while she sits composed and unharmed in her queenly beauty. Our soil has drunk blood like water, while hardly a stain of it is on hers. Armies have marched and countermarched, skirmished and fought within our borders, while not a battle, great or small, has been waged within hers. Whole sections of Missouri present tenantless houses, while her habitations are filled with prosperous and happy people. Here, thousands of deserted farms are overgrown with weeds; there, the whole land yields bounteously to the hand of peaceful and thrifty labor. By every roadside in Missouri lie the bones of those slain by the stealthy shot from the bush, while the citizens of Illinois, old and young, male and female, travel her quiet highways, as free from molestation or fear, as if Slavery were waging no war against their country. And while no incendiary fires light up her blooming prairies, the guerrilla's fiendish work blazes almost nightly in lonely spots in our devoted State. Never did river divide two such variant scenes in the midst of one people. What means this most striking difference? Every member of this Convention knows, or may know, with as clear and undoubting certainty as he knows that the breath of life is in him, that there is but one possible solution of the contrast, and that is, that Slavery is in Missouri, and is not in Illinois! That is what has brought upon our people the aggravated horrors of the last two years; that is what renders life and property in many parts of Missouri more insecure than it would be in our Indian territory; that is what requires our militia to be armed and alert; that is what arms multitudes in Missouri in defense of their homes and their lives; that is what fills our noble State with a bitter and biting curse, wasting away her very life, and making her, in many parts, but the stark skeleton of her former self: and it is with that we have to deal in this body, representing the personality and the power of her wronged and afflicted people. Who doubts, then, that the spirit of Slavery is everywhere the same? True, it may be more actively ferocious and implacable in one region than in another, as the surrounding circumstances excite or repress its action; but still in all places it is essentially identical. And as Missouri Slavery has, through many of its votaries and defenders, shown itself even more rapacious and relentless than Slavery in other border States, I can perceive no title it can urge to a stay of that execution of Slavery here, as over this whole land, by warlike or by peaceful means, which is to mark its retribution as a traitor and a paricide.

The institution of Slavery in the United States was doomed to extinction when South Carolina, by her ordinance of secession, attempted to make it the corner-stone of "a Confederacy of slaveholding States" on this continent. From that hour, what had before been, not only tolerated, but courted and caressed, lost its hold upon the patriots of the nation, and has finally become intolerable. The President's Proclamation of Emancipation was but the result of a resistless necessity laid upon the nation to crush its only intestine foe. That Proclamation declared Slavery extinct throughout rebeldom on the first day of this year, and, practically, it there ceased to be, from the day that thunderbolt fell upon it. No power on earth can resuscitate it there; and it lives in the loyal slave States, only until their people can, by their own peaceful action, do for it among themselves what the President, by warlike means, has done for it elsewhere. The crime which invoked his action was not merely that of men acting in the interest of Slavery—it was the crime of *the institution* itself, which creates and fosters a passion for predominance and power; and for that crime the institution must fall, everywhere throughout this land. To leave it standing on any spot of this country, is to leave the way open for future revolts, disturbing the peace of the nation and threatening the life of our free institutions. The people begin, at last, to comprehend this fully, and they are willing to abandon Slavery to its fate, and thereby save their country. Pre-eminently and nobly is this true of the people of Missouri. They are resolved and ready to sacrifice Slavery on the altar of patriotism. Their recent manifestations, in my view, leave little room for cavil or doubt on this point. In their minds there is no holding back, whatever is in the minds of politicians. Their will may possibly be baffled for a time, but it will certainly conquer. We, their legally delegated representatives, will do well to heed their voice. I, for one, will do so.

The circumstances under which we are called to consider the subject of the emancipation of slaves in this State are without a precedent, unless the recent movement in West Virginia should be considered in some sense a precedent. We are to act under the influence of a conviction, forced upon us by the peril threatening our nation, and because it is manifest that as long as this war continues, and Missouri is a slave State, she will, for that reason, be subject to incursions from abroad and to convulsions within, which will cripple her energies, waste her resources, and cover her people with disaster and grief. In

previous instances, Emancipation has been accomplished in the midst of peace. There is therefore no similarity of condition between Missouri and any of the States of the Union which, in former years, adopted gradual systems of Emancipation. With them, the whole case was within their own grasp, free from external pressure; with us, external circumstances, over which we can exercise no efficient control, combine with our internal condition to create the exigency which calls for Emancipation. Their modes of action, therefore, should not, in my judgment, be a criterion for ours. They could afford to take their own time to put Slavery away: with us, time is not at our disposal, if we would place Missouri completely and forever beyond the hope of Southern traitors, and free her from the curse of home-bred treason. The times demand early, direct, and effective action—in my opinion, demand *immediate* Emancipation, and the final exclusion of Slavery from our territory. I am quite aware that this is a proposition to revolutionize, in a considerable degree, the social organization of our State; but it is a revolution to save us from blood, instead of plunging us into it; a revolution for peace, not for war; a revolution for prosperity, not for adversity. If I can succeed in inducing others to view it in this light, I shall not doubt the ultimate issue of the action of this body.

I do not intend at this time to discuss to any extent the statistics of Missouri Slavery; nor does it now appear to me important to discuss them at all. Should my views on this point undergo a change, I may hereafter participate in statistical discussions, if they arise. There are great general aspects of this most weighty subject, which seem to me to take in enough to sustain the position I have assumed, and I shall therefore at present confine myself to them.

In the first place, it has ever been a cardinal doctrine of the Southern advocates of Slavery, that it must have room for unrestricted territorial expansion. I admit that if it is to exist at all, as it exists in the South, it must have such room. The tendency of Slavery is to large landed estates, with few whites and many slaves. This requires constant extension of the territory occupied by Slavery. And such is the greater ratio of increase of slave population than of the white race, in some parts of the country, that to restrict Slavery there to certain defined and inexorable limits would, in the course of time, result in the exclusion of the whites, and the abandonment of the country to the blacks, or their constant subjugation by armed force to the dominion of their masters. Though these views may not apply as forcibly to Missouri as to the South, still while

Slavery exists there, and here also, she is a party to their demand for the territorial extension of Slavery. And now, what is her present, and what is to be her future, position on this point? Let us frankly meet the truth as it stands. She is totally cut off from the possibility of aiding in expanding slave territory, or of being a participant in any such extension, or in any possible scheme having that end in view. I can conceive of no circumstances under which she can be severed from the Union. As I said in a public address in April, 1862, so I say now, that "the National Government would wage endless war—and ought to do so—rather than suffer her to become the possession of any foreign power. Her destiny, therefore, is fixed, finally and irrevocably, in the Union." In considering her relations to Slavery, we are, therefore, to regard her as isolated from the insurgent States, as absolutely as if an ocean rolled between her and them. With territory on her eastern, northern, and western borders made free by the will of the people there, and with territory on her southern border made free by the power of the nation through the laws of war, she is to have no part or lot hereafter forever in any plan, or hope, or dream of Slavery extension. Hence one great ligament binding her to that institution is broken, never to be reunited. We are, therefore, to deal with this subject in the light of that most important fact. And what is its significance to us? In my judgment, it points to a severance of all ties of sympathy between us and an institution which by its war upon the Union, has, within two years, brought calamities upon the country vastly overbalancing all the benefits which its most ardent friends could claim to have resulted from its whole existence in this land.

With this primary point settled, two inquiries, closely allied to each other, arise, viz: 1. What has Missouri gained by the existence of Slavery within her borders? and 2. What can she expect to gain by its continuance there?

If you point, in the past, to her agricultural productions, largely the result of slave labor, I admit the fact; but direct you to the far greater amount produced by Illinois, in less time, with free labor. If you refer to her rapidly increasing population, I refer you to the marked superiority of Illinois, and even Iowa, in that respect. The latter, twenty-seven years ago, had hardly a white inhabitant; now it is the home of nearly 700,000 people—more than half as many as sixty years of American occupancy have brought to Missouri. If you look at her railroads, which have entailed a debt of more than twenty millions of dollars upon her, I show you

half as much in Iowa, and three times as much in Illinois, without a dollar of State debt upon either for them. You can probably name no particular, except the culture of hemp and tobacco, in which Missouri is not far behind her adjacent neighbor on the east, and soon will be behind her northern neighbor, if Slavery remains among us. In regard to those two items of production, she has been placed by slave labor in the advance; but already since, for the sake of Slavery, she was dragged into the arena of this fratricidal war, she has probably lost ten times more than all the profits of her hemp and tobacco ever since she became a State. How then stands the account of profit and loss in the past from her connection with Slavery? Does any one—can any one doubt that the loss of what she might have been more than she is, and the actual loss in war of what she had, will more than outweigh the largest estimate of the profit she has derived from Slavery?

Does the future offer any more cheering prospect? With Slavery remaining among us, are we to gain upon, or even keep up with, our neighbors in the race of progress and improvement? Are we to move forward with any more rapidity than in the past? Heretofore, with as fertile lands as Illinois or Iowa, at less than half the price of theirs, the tide of emigration has, to a large extent, avoided Missouri. What is to make it different in the future? After this war for slavery extension and empire shall have ended in the complete and final overthrow of Slavery throughout the rebel States—as it certainly will,—is it likely that the adventurous sons of the free States will be so enamored of Slavery, as to seek homes in the few remaining States which still cling to this arch-enemy of the Union? No thoughtful man expects or believes that they will. It is therefore as certain as anything future can be, that, as a slave State, Missouri is still to be, as she has been, a laggard in the march of progress—is to be far behind what as a free State she is capable of being—is to be ever struggling with a self-imposed burden, pressing her down and paralyzing her energies, till, in some more favored hour, her people rise with one mighty impulse, and shame us by doing what we had it in our power, but lacked wisdom or nerve, to do. In the meantime, who can estimate the loss to Missouri, by her failure to assume a position of equality with her neighbor States? How much hemp and tobacco, raised by slave labor, will balance the account? We want *population*! We want it for our immense territory, hardly yet begun to be developed; we want it for our deserted farms and abandoned homesteads; we want it to unearth our exhaustless stores of mineral wealth; we want it to re-

place the thousands of our people who have fallen, and are yet to fall, victims to this cruel war; we want it to renovate our drooping commerce, to complete and sustain our improvements, to give increased value to our lands, to help pay our debt; we want it, in short, to make Missouri as great in her mature development as she is in her native resources; and in my deliberate judgment, we shall not get it while Slavery is among us, and shall get it, certainly and soon, if we put Slavery away from us.

These are the general views which implant within me the resolute purpose, for the good of Missouri, to contribute, in every way I can, to remove from her territory an institution which, I verily believe, has injured, incomparably more than it has benefited her; which promises no compensation to her people for past calamities; and which, so long as it abides among us, is to repress her vigor, retard her growth, and stimulate treason, disloyalty, and rapine. In these views I am satisfied the great majority of the loyal people of this State concur.

But while it may be conceded by others that a large majority of the loyal people of Missouri are for Emancipation in some form, it may be denied that such a majority exists for immediate Emancipation. This I propose to leave to their decision at the ballot-box. To that decision, if adverse, I will bow with the respect due from every man in a republic to the fairly expressed will of the majority. I desire, however, to place before the people's delegates, and eventually before the people themselves, the considerations which influence me to espouse immediate Emancipation.

In the first place, I believe it of the highest importance in reference to the peace of Missouri, that Emancipation should be immediate. It is of the utmost interest to our people, not only to be themselves assured that Missouri is to remain forever a part of the Union, but to feel that the whole country has that assurance. Especially is it of the gravest moment to them, that all rebeldom should know, past all peradventure, that all attempts to entangle her in their meshes are, and are forever to be, utterly futile. It is most evident that the rebel leaders have not yet come to know or believe that she is beyond their grasp. A part of their plans has been to make the Missouri river their northern boundary; and it requires something more than fighting to make them yield that idea. As long as their piratical power remains unbroken, they will strive to subject Southern Missouri to their dominion. And as long as there is any belief among our people of the possibility of the accomplishment of that object, so long will the spirit of revolt and plunder be rife among us,

making life and property insecure, unsettling the foundations of our prosperity, driving valuable population into the surrounding States for safety, and preventing accessions of people from abroad, except to those populous places, which have within themselves the capacity of self-defense. Every attempt, too, by the rebels to establish themselves within our limits, whether successful or not, must be attended with terrible injury to our people; to say nothing of the horrible outrages of the guerrilla and the bushwhacker, carrying fear and desolation into almost every neighborhood; or of the murderous affrays between individuals, which have already caused so much bloodshed, and threaten so much more. I wish, if possible, to put a speedy and final end to all this, by destroying that which, in my opinion, is its sole cause. I do not suppose there is a member of this body, who believes that if Missouri had been a free State she would have been subjected to the five-hundredth part of the evils that have befallen her. Bordering southward upon Arkansas, with no natural boundary separating her from that State, we could not have expected such immunity from invasion as Illinois has enjoyed, with the Ohio river on her south; but still, without that advantage, we should have been comparatively free from rebel incursion, if there had been no Slavery among us. It was our being a slave State that caused the attempt to take Missouri into the rebel confederacy; it was our being a slave State that led some fifteen thousand of our citizens into "Price's Army;" it was our being a slave State that invited that army into our borders; it was our being a slave State that has filled our woods with thieving and murderous banditti; in fact, it may be said, without exaggeration, that hardly a misfortune has befallen our State within the last two years, which is not directly and fairly due to the existence of Slavery among us. And to me it is equally apparent that these calamities will cease almost instantly upon the final and irrevocable displacement of Slavery from our soil. I wish them to cease at the earliest available moment; and every patriot, every Christian, every humane man must join in that wish. It will be gratified, if Slavery is put away from us, in such a way as to leave no hope of its return. A gradual system of Emancipation, extending through a series of years, would invite agitation for its repeal the moment this war is ended: a declaration of immediate Emancipation closes the door forever against all agitation, and gives us peace. Let no one say that such agitation will be impossible after the adoption of an ordinance of gradual emancipation. It will be possible, and probable too,

whenever the General Assembly shall repeal the test-oath ordinance of June, 1862, and restore to the privileges of citizenship the bloody-handed marauders who have ravaged almost every part of Missouri; as, in my opinion, that body will do, whenever by dissimulation, cajolery, and fraud, disloyalty shall be—as it probably will be, unless baffled by some action of this Convention—in the ascendant there again.

I would lift from off our State the deadly incubus which weighs it down, and at the same time leave not the least ray of hope of its ever being again imposed upon us. In my judgment immediate Emancipation will do this, and I cannot see that anything else will. For the sake, therefore, of present peace and lasting repose, I am for immediate Emancipation.

But not alone on the plea for peace to our people do I base my advocacy of this policy. As a mere question of political economy, I hold it to be directly and greatly to the interest of our State to declare immediate Emancipation. As we all know, the slaves of Missouri are, to a large extent, its agricultural and domestic laborers; in some sections, almost its only ones. I understand, I think, nearly as well as the people of those sections, that to take from them suddenly those laborers, without replacing them with others, would work extended and serious injury; and, paradoxical as it may seem to some, it is to avoid that very result that I would make Emancipation immediate. If it be asked how this is to be done, I point to the condition of our slave population, as known to every observing and reading man. In whole sections of the State they are in a ferment; while in no section, so far as I can learn, are they in the quiet condition of two years ago. They are moving, or being moved, all over our territory. From the eastern, northern, and western borders they are being moved by their masters to the centre, to prevent their moving themselves beyond the circumference into the free States. From the centre they are being moved into Kentucky, ostensibly to be employed in raising tobacco, but really to escape Emancipation. From every part they are moving themselves into regions where they may find the freedom they desire, and of which they have discovered that they can, in our present unsettled condition, easily avail themselves. There is at this moment hardly a slave owner in our State, who can lie down at night with any well grounded confidence that the morning will find him in possession of as many slaves as when he went to sleep. The State is daily losing its slave laborers, and no man can tell when the exodus will

cease. And what is more momentous, it is the young, and the vigorous middle-aged men, that are departing, leaving the old men, the women, and the children, to be cared for by their masters. What is to stay this movement? With war imminent at any moment; with an internal condition so disturbed that pursuit of fugitive slaves is, beyond any precedent, of doubtful result; with every road beset by marauders and murderers; it is notorious that slaves possess, and know that they possess, facilities for escape, such as they never had before, and that they are availing themselves of them, as they never did before. We will do well to look at these things as they are. It is folly to shut our eyes to them. We might as well realize that our State is rapidly losing its agricultural laboring strength, and that ere long, in all human probability, it will lose it entirely, unless some barrier to this exodus be interposed. And as we are in no condition to employ, as effectually as heretofore, a barrier of force, my view is to take from the slaves the inducement to seek freedom by flight, by making them free here. It is not from Missouri they are flying, but from slavery; it is not Illinois, Iowa, or Kansas they are seeking, but freedom; and for this they leave old and familiar homes, wives, children, and friends, to enter upon new scenes among strangers, not knowing what will be their condition, nor caring what their fate, so it be met in freedom.

And now, as a merely economical question—as a simple matter of dollars and cents, I ask if it is not the interest of our State to keep those laborers among us? What are we to gain by their self-deportation? Could we transfer them all, to-day, to another continent, and receive an equivalent accession of white laborers, we should, I think, be immensely the gainers by the exchange; but that is not the point. The question is, whether we shall quietly see the effective labor of our agriculture march away from us, with nothing to replace it, or whether we shall pursue such a policy as will retain it until its place can be supplied? For my part, I can see no two sides to such a question. No sane man believes that a substitute for a servile population of 80,000 to 100,000 souls can be obtained in any country or State in a period short of years; and least of all in a country that is losing by war so much of its bone and muscle as this country is losing now. It is therefore our clear interest, as a simple matter of political economy, to keep the negroes here until their places can be filled by white laborers. If the slaves understand that they are to remain slaves for an indefinite or a protracted

period, they will continue to flee; and how are we to stop them? They go now, day by day, and night by night, and we are powerless to prevent it. When will this cease? Not, I verily believe, until you give them, on our own soil, at their old homes, the freedom they are seeking elsewhere; the aspiration for which has received, in two years of war for the extension and dominion of Slavery, a hundred fold greater impulse, than all the efforts and appliances of Abolitionists for a quarter of a century could have given.

It is to avoid this drain of the laboring strength of our State, and at the same time prevent too severe a shock to our social organization, from so sudden a change in our system of labor, that I couple with immediate Emancipation the idea of a system of apprenticeship, which shall retain the negroes in their positions for a limited period. I desire that Emancipation should work as little injury as practicable, and accomplish for both races the greatest possible amount of good. I do not think it would be wise or humane to invest so large a slave population as that of Missouri, with the instant right of uncontrolled freedom. In many respects they are like children, and need to be educated into a fitness for such freedom. This is my judgment, founded upon the observation of more than forty years. But while I would have them pass through an apprenticeship, I would not extend that period a day beyond the time necessary to fit them measurably for entire freedom, and to afford opportunity for replacing them with white laborers. If their apprenticeship is to benefit them, or those for whom they labor, it should not be of such long duration as not to be distinguished by them from a state of permanent slavery, nor so short as to defeat the great object of obtaining white labor, equal to the demand, before the negro labor is left entirely to its own control. If the negroes are to remain among us, it is at once humane toward them and profitable to those for whom they work, that they should work *in hope*. My belief is, that properly managed and influenced, they are capable of being made, probably, as valuable a peasantry as exists. Give them something to live for—let them feel that they are preparing better to live for themselves, and I have confidence that they will be found more capable of enjoying and profiting by their freedom than many are accustomed to suppose. It should be remembered that we may reasonably hope for better results of Emancipation here, than have attended it in other countries, so far as the negroes are concerned. They have been reared, and will remain, under better influences of morality and religion among us, than the

slaves emancipated by England or France were subjected to in the colonial possessions of those countries. We may hope and believe that those influences will continue to be exerted, and be effective, for the elevation of our black race. I, for one, am sanguine on that point. It is our interest to teach the blacks all the good, and as little of evil, as we can. It is our duty as philanthropists and Christians to do so. And when Christian duty and self interest combine, we may well expect great results. It is to give full opportunity for this, as well as on account of the other considerations adverted to, that I desire this class of our population to come gradually to full freedom; not through a slowly expiring system of slavery, but through a period of apprenticeship, the end of which they can see to be not far off, and the time spent in which shall be a time of advancement, not of retrogression, with them.

This plan ought to, and it seems to me would, avoid much of the difficulty anticipated by many, of contact with so large a population reared in servitude and then set free. I have met persons who seemed to be haunted by the idea of dreadful inconvenience, injury, and peril, to result from the surrounding presence of free blacks. So far as this relates to rural life, I confess I have not had such experience as to enable me to speak advisedly; but through my whole life I have been familiar with this subject in cities; and my belief is, that much less mischief proceeds from the free colored population there, than from any equal number of white people in corresponding condition of life. Nor am I aware of any moral or physical reason why their presence among us, after emancipation, should be so dreaded as some seem to dread it. But were all their apprehensions well founded, I claim that we are just as capable of managing free negroes, through our laws and our judicial and ministerial authorities, as of managing the same number of white people. But were it otherwise, I take the broad ground that it is far better for the people of Missouri to encounter all the inconvenience, all the trouble, and all the hazard of the presence of a large free black population, through the period of perhaps not more than a single generation, than to entail upon future generations an institution which, as long as it exists, is to hang like a mill-stone upon our State; and at some future day, perhaps, bring down upon it again such disasters as have, during the past two years, made it a field of blood.

I have endeavored, in a spirit of candor, to set forth the views which lead me to favor immediate Emancipation. I doubt if they will be shown to be intrinsically unsound; and I doubt

also whether an attempt will be made to do so. It is more probable that the effort will be to decry this policy, on the ground of its supposed injustice, not to the million and more of non-slaveholders in our State, but to the 25,000, or less, of our slaveholders. I have heard much of this alleged injustice, and I expect to hear more of it here. It is the old clamor by which the interests of our noble country have long been subordinated to those of a small fraction of its people; and I look for it to play its accustomed part in this great struggle for the liberation of Missouri from thralldom to "the peculiar institution." It is proper that it should be met at the threshold of this discussion, and I will endeavor to meet it.

It is considered to be a great wrong to the slaveholder to deprive him immediately of his right of property in his slaves; and this is by many held to be a sufficient reason why the best interests of a great State should be disregarded, or, at any rate, postponed. What is its real meaning? That depends upon the connection in which it is found. In regard to the question of Emancipation or no Emancipation, it means no Emancipation under any circumstances—no tampering with the Divine right of holding the negro in bondage—no interference with the absolute privilege of Slavery to establish, extend, and perpetuate itself wherever it once gains a footing. In regard to the question of immediate or gradual Emancipation, it means gradual—the most gradual that can possibly be obtained—the remotest period and the slowest process that the people can, by the cry of injustice to the slaveholder, be induced to allow. If this is not its meaning, I confess myself unable to discover it. Whether so or not, however, I propose to consider this question of injustice. The views I take of it may be erroneous, but until their error is made clear to me I must be guided by them. No impulse of injustice governs me; neither do I intend that my judgment shall be warped by a groundless fear of doing injustice to those, upon whom it is my honest purpose to confer what appears to me a signal benefit.

The value of a slave to his owner is two-fold: first, in the profit of his labor over and above taxation and the expense of supporting and taking care of him; and secondly, in the amount for which, as property, he can be sold. Let us consider this subject in both these aspects.

As long as the labor of a slave yields more than the necessary outlay on his account, the mere computation of income is in favor of his employment as a slave. But whenever he costs more than his labor is worth, the account

changes, and he becomes a burden to his owner. Tested by this simple rule, I am of the opinion that a great majority of the slaves in Missouri are this day unprofitable to their owners. But setting aside the old, the infirm, and the very young, and fixing the attention upon those who yield the largest profit, I am satisfied that their labor, in freedom, would be far more valuable than it has ever been in bondage. Repeated experiments have been made in the Southern States, of paying slaves for their labor, and requiring them to support themselves. In every such instance which has come to my knowledge, either through publications or private sources, it has been found that the negro worked better and produced more, when paid, than when not. "his is a most instructive and pregnant fact. It teaches us that, regarding the negro merely as a laborer, there is not the least injustice to the owner in changing him from a bond to a hired laborer; but, on the contrary, a positive benefit. For we have no reason to doubt that the same result which has followed experimental changes of that description, would attend a similar change in our entire system. It is no answer to this view, to say that the negro will not work, unless compelled by authority, or driven to it by his necessities. We do not know that; but, on the other hand, we know that free negroes, all over this country, do work, as white men work, for the support of themselves and their families, and do exhibit steady industry and thoughtful frugality. There is then no injustice to the slaveholder in changing his relation to the negro, so as to pay for his labor, and thereby realize a larger profit from it, than if the latter were a slave.

The alleged injustice must therefore be, in depriving the owner, by the emancipation of his slave, of the right of selling the slave as a chattel. On this point the fact of deprivation cannot be denied, if the slave remains in this State, up to the day mentioned in the resolution. But he who does not wish his slaves to be freed on that day, will previously remove them to some other State, where he can sell them, or, if he please, retain them in slavery. The inconvenience to him of such removal is no just ground for delaying a measure that is fraught with the most momentous results to the present and future people of this State.

But suppose no slaves should be removed before the day named, and all then in the State should become free, how would the matter stand? Assuming the President's Proclamation, of January 1st, 1863, to be operative and effectual, as I certainly do, the Southern market for the slaves of the border States is gone forever, and with it has gone a large part of the market value

of Missouri slaves. This may be an unpalatable truth, but it is, nevertheless, the truth. The presence of war in this State, creating exceeding insecurity of slave property, tends still further to diminish its marketable value. It is, therefore, I conceive, entirely fair to consider the market value of Missouri slaves reduced at this time to an average of one-half, or less, of what it was in 1860. And when you throw out of the consideration of the question of injustice to the slave owners, the large number of such who have participated actively in this rebellion, or given it aid and comfort, and whose slaves are therefore in fact free, under the Act of Congress of July 17, 1862, though still held in bondage; and also put aside the vast throng of other disloyal owners, who are not entitled to any consideration whatever at our hands; and also lay out of view, first, the large number of slaveholders who, in violation of law, let their slaves hire their own time, and by that violation disentitle themselves to our favor; second, the other large number who are totally indifferent as to whether they retain their slaves or not; and third, the still larger number, as I would hope and believe, of true and earnest patriots, who either desire, or will cordially agree to, immediate Emancipation, for the sake of the Union and of peace: when you put aside the grand array of slaveholders embraced in these various classes, you would find, if a correct result could be arrived at, that only a very small proportion of the supposed number of 25,000 slaveholders in the State would be entitled or disposed to complain of the injustice done them by immediate Emancipation. Concerning them I would say, first, that if they are landholders—as, doubtless, nine-tenths of them are—they will certainly, as a body, and probably in each individual case, be far more than compensated for the loss upon their slaves, by the increased value of their lands, produced by Emancipation: and secondly, if they are not landholders, they will be more than compensated by the general flow of prosperity, beyond anything previously known, which will assuredly result from Missouri's becoming a free State.

But even supposing these views untenable, and admitting all the injury to the slaveholders which is claimed, then I close this branch of the discussion with the distinct announcement that, in my opinion, in such a dire emergency as that now upon us, individual interests, and interests of classes, must give way to the general good. Were it in my power, by any act of mine, to accomplish immediate Emancipation without inconvenience to any single loyal slaveholder in our State, I would joyfully do it; but I have no such power. My duty here is to legislate, not for indi-

viduals or classes, but for the whole of our people; not for the Missouri of to-day merely, but for the Missouri that is to be here, perhaps, for ages to come; not for the present generation only, but for the unborn generations that are to fill our extended territory in the long future; not for our State alone, but for our whole glorious country; not for the sordid behests of expiring, but still grasping, Slavery, but for the beneficent expansion and perpetuation of an ennobling and deathless Freedom. I endeavor to rise to the height of the great occasion, and with such distant approach to statesmanship as I can make, to view the mighty interests staked on our action; and I neither can nor will suffer myself to be swerved from the path of duty, as it seems plain to me, by an undue deference to individuals or classes. In this great conflict for the redemption of a State fit to be in itself an Empire, private interests must be sacrificed, if necessary, to those of the vast aggregate, present and prospective, whose enduring welfare demands our first care and our highest consideration. This is my standard of duty, and by it I will stand or fall.

And now I will close my remarks on this particular topic, with a notice of the moral aspect of an appeal against immediate Emancipation, based on injustice to slaveholders. The whole foundation of this allegation of injustice, if it has any, is in immediately taking away from one man the right to hold another man in bondage, and to sell him as a slave, instead of taking it away at a distant day. I have no comments to make here upon the morality of Slavery; for its sins are infinitely more heinous in my view, than any intrinsic immorality which may be attributed to it; and they are enough for all my purposes now. I therefore pass by the moral questions involved in Slavery itself, to direct your attention to the true character of any appeal to you on the score of injustice to slaveholders. You will agree with me, that in all the history of the world, no nation was ever so threatened, assailed, and endangered by intestine enemies, as this nation has been for more than two years. You will agree with me, that it has struggled and is still struggling for its life. You will agree with me,—perhaps, not all, but most of you,—that it is the institution of Slavery, and nothing else, that menaces our national existence. You will agree with me,—perhaps not all, but most of you,—that every drop of blood which has been shed, every life that has been sacrificed, every ghastly wound that has been inflicted, every widow and orphan that has been made, every house that has been desolated, lays its account, before God and man, at the door of

Slavery. You will agree with me, all of you, that Missouri has suffered her full share of these dreadful afflictions; so that were the signs of mourning to mark every habitation upon which they have fallen, our whole State should be draped in black this day. And you will agree with me,—perhaps not unanimously,—that as long as Slavery exists here, this torrent of unheard-of misery is to continue to pour upon us, and that it will cease when Slavery ceases with us, and not before. And now, in the full light of all this, you will probably be appealed to, to stay the emancipating act for years, perhaps many years, because it is unjust to a few thousands of our more than a million of people, to deprive them suddenly of the right to hold men and women as their property, and of the privilege of profiting by the continuance among us of that institution, which is “the cause of all our woe!” What is this, in plain terms, but an invocation of continued feud, war, rapine, and death, rather than that the small part of our population who are slaveholders should now, instead of years hence, cease to have the right to sell the negro as a slave? Can you make ought else of it? If you can, show it; if you cannot, then agree with me that the spirit of Slavery is everywhere the same; that it is always selfish, greedy, and remorseless; that in Missouri it is not less so than elsewhere; and that it is as impossible for devotion to Slavery and vital generous patriotism to co-exist in the same heart, as it is for fire to rest unquenched upon the bosom of the great river that laves the base of the capitol in which we sit.

It will not have escaped notice, that I have made no reference to compensation by the State to the owners of slaves. On that subject my words will be very few. In the first place, there is no Constitutional injunction upon this body, as there is upon the Legislature, to provide such compensation, as a pre-requisite to Emancipation; and there is therefore no Constitutional obligation upon us to consider the question. In the next place, compensation by the State, out of her own resources, is an absolute impossibility; and therefore it is useless to discuss it. It could be got from the people of Missouri only by long-continued and most grievous taxation, which they would not bear, and which I never would, by any act of mine, help to impose upon them. Should the nation, in pursuance of the resolution adopted by the last Congress, hereafter grant money or bonds to compensate our few thousand loyal slaveholders for doing what patriotism and humanity ought to make them do without compensation, let them receive the money, if they please. Were I a slaveholder, I would

scorn to touch a dime of it. And there is one other contingency in which I would vote compensation to loyal slaveholders, and that is, when our rebel and traitorous slaveholders, and their sympathizing pro-slavery friends, shall, in any way they may devise,—about which “no questions asked,”—obtain and pay into the State Treasury, in “Bankable Funds” or in “greenbacks,”—gold not required,—a sum sufficient to indemnify Missouri for all the ravage, destruction, and misery she has endured through their efforts to drag her out of the Union. When official information is obtained that Slavery has thus balanced its account with Missouri, there will be little difficulty about compensation. Until that fund is provided—which I confess does not seem to me very near at hand; or the nation comes to our aid—of which I am not hopeful; compensation is a fantasy, or, in less elegant phrase, a humbug, and might as well be treated as such, here and elsewhere.

Having thus, gentlemen of the Convention, placed before you the views I entertain on this most important subject, I invoke you to a calm and deliberate consideration of our position as a body in reference to Slavery. Why are we called together now? Less than two years ago, on the 3d of August, 1861, our present Governor, in a Proclamation to the people of Missouri, issued upon his taking the reins of the Provisional Government, declared that his appointment as Provisional Governor would “satisfy all, that no countenance would be afforded to any scheme, or any conduct calculated in any degree to interfere with the institution of Slavery existing in the State, and that to the very utmost extent of Executive power that institution would be protected.” From any man such language could not be misunderstood; but from a man who during forty years of life as a lawyer had bent the energies of a keen and powerful mind to the study of the meaning and use of words, it had, to my mind, and I believe to the whole mind of Missouri, a most distinct and unmistakeable import. I do not suppose that an intelligent man ever read that sentence, who did not receive from it the impression that our State Administration had passed into the hands of a pro-slavery man, and would be conducted by him in the interest of Slavery. On the 13th of June, 1862, the same Governor transmitted to this body a message suggesting that its action in laying on the table an ordinance providing for submitting to a vote of the people a gradual scheme of Emancipation, after Congress had, at the suggestion of the President, passed a resolution offer-

ing national aid to any of the slave States that might see proper to adopt such a measure, might "be represented as rudely discourteous to the President and Congress;" and that some "direct response" should be made, as "an act of courtesy to the authorities of our Government, who had made a proposition which, if it ever be carried into effect, would exhibit the greatest liberality." In that message the Governor intimated to the Convention that its members might, before their constituents, justify the refusal to allow the question of Emancipation to be discussed, and the laying of the proposed ordinance on the table, by taking the position, that it was "well warranted in declining to act upon the proposition, upon the ground that the people, in choosing the Convention, never intended or imagined that the body would undertake any social revolution wholly unconnected with the relations between the State and the General Government." And so confident was the Governor in the correctness of this position, that he added the significant declaration, that "no person who understands the principles of our Government would object to such action, unless it be one *who is willing to disregard all principle to accomplish a desired end.*" Ten months and two days after that message was sent, the same Governor issues a call for this Convention to assemble, "to consult and act upon the subject of the Emancipation of Slaves;" declaring it "of the highest importance to the interest of the State that some scheme of Emancipation should be adopted;" and his message to this body yesterday reiterates that opinion in emphatic and impressive terms.

I refer to these acts and declarations of the Governor, not because I think his change in any degree unworthy of his high character and position, but for reasons which I will proceed to state. In the first place, the people do not understand why he should call us together to overthrow the institution of Slavery, when he had previously declared "that to the very utmost extent of Executive power, that institution would be protected." Nor do they understand why this Convention, nearly nine-tenths of whose members were elected two years and four months ago,—as he considered for other purposes,—should now be invoked to act on Emancipation, while a proposition is still pending before our Legislature,—which is to reassemble in November next,—for the election of another Convention, which would come fresh from the people, and certainly represent their views. Nor do they understand why he should convene this body, which, one year ago, he declared to have no power over the subject; and which then signaled its opposition to Emancipation, by re-

lentlessly stifling debate upon it, against the entreaties and remonstrances of its friends, and laying upon the table, by a vote of nearly three to one, a scheme of very gradual Emancipation. The people do not understand these things; nor do they entertain much hope of good to Emancipation from this body. They fear that its call at this time, though perhaps not so intended, may result in the practical defeat of Emancipation, by the adoption of some scheme so feeble and inert as to prolong Slavery in this State, with a continuance of the wretchedness it has brought upon us, until some distant day; when, with rebels, guerrillas, and bushwhackers restored to the privilege of the ballot, Emancipation will be repealed, our State given over again to the dominion of Slavery, and anti-slavery men and Union men driven from its borders, or trampled under foot. I do not say that this was the purpose, or even in the mind, of the Executive in convening us now; but that the great mass of our loyal people fear that such may be the result of our assembling. And as one of the few in this body who represent the latest expression of a part of our people, directly upon the all-engrossing topic of Emancipation, I ask this Convention to be cautious how it gives, by its action, any confirmation of the popular belief and fears to which I have referred. The people are in no mood to be trifled with in this matter. They have their eyes upon us, and they will not take them off. They know what Emancipation means, and they likewise know what *bogus* Emancipation means. They know that the former will bring them relief from the incalculable sufferings they have endured through two nightmare years; and that the latter will but prolong those sufferings. And now, not in the spirit of bravado or menace, but to say with all plainness of speech what the circumstances seem to me to require, I say that whoever here misrepresents the will of his constituents on this subject, is as certainly a doomed man with them, as he is doomed some time to die! To those original members who represent districts that have recently filled vacancies by electing immediate Emancipationists, this matter seems to me to commend itself in a very special manner. I know well that they do not stand or fall by my judgment, but by the judgment of their constituents; and that will be a judgment of approval or condemnation, just as their last expressed will is obeyed or contemned. Let him beware of the future who contemns it!

Another object I had in view in referring to those acts and declarations of the Governor, was, to point you to the significance of his complete and auspicious change of mind in regard to

Emancipation. Do you not see that he moves with public opinion against Slavery? Do you not see the hand-writing on the wall? If not, I pray you to open your eyes to it, and read the doom of Slavery in Missouri, written by her loyal people, in characters never to be effaced. Read it in the changed views and action of the Executive; in the results of recent elections to fill vacancies in this body; in the primary assemblies of the people; in the tone of the public press, with few exceptions, throughout our State; in the sudden and precipitate abandonment of Slavery's defense by obstinate proslavery men in every quarter; in every form and phase in which the stern and steady resolve that Slavery shall cease to exist on our soil, and that right early, can make itself known. You cannot protect it, you cannot prop it up, you cannot defend it. Its prestige is gone; it has lost its power; it is in disgrace. It stands at the bar of public opinion in Missouri condemned by its fruits, hopelessly and without possibility of appeal. It has ever been a clog upon our advance and prosperity. It has allied us to the insurrectionary States. It has made our territory the field of civil war. It keeps up the domestic strife now desolating our State, when the rebel armies are at a hopeless distance. It fills our woods with robbing and murdering hordes,

who are fed, clothed, and sheltered, warned of approaching danger, and guided to pilage and blood, by the neighbors of their victims. It transforms our men, and, God forgive them! our women, too, into implacable enemies of Union men, into treacherous betrayers of their former friends, into spies and informers, into purveyors of revenge, rapine, and assassination. Against this common enemy, all classes of our people make common cause. Every great interest in our State wars upon it. Farmers, mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, professional men, speculators, land-owners, steamboatmen, railroad men, and multitudes of slaveholders, all combine to attack it. Reason is against it; evidence is against it; experience is against it. The past condemns it; the future rejects it; the present deals it deadly blows. The people are marching over it. Politicians abandon it, as rats a falling house. It is, in fact, dead! We are here to bury it. They who cling to it cling to a corpse, and will be buried with it. No man who upholds it now will be trusted by the people, except perhaps in a few spots of our State, from this time forward. You cannot save it, but you may lose yourself in the effort. When the wrecked vessel goes down, it is they who cling to it to the last, that go down with it.